

HOW TO DEAL WITH *THE YIPS*

Executive Director's Letter

In some reading, I came across a condition I had never heard of before: "the yips." Just do an online search of "the yips" and you can read about how traumatic and life-changing it is for those who once mindlessly, successfully did a task they ultimately found debilitatingly difficult to do.

The term comes up most frequently in golf and baseball.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines "the yips" as, "nervousness or tension that causes an athlete to fail to perform effectively, especially in missing short putts in golf."

Mackey Sasser was a catcher who, after a home plate collision, began having difficulty accurately throwing the baseball back to the pitcher. Second baseman Chuck Knoblauch started having trouble throwing accurately to first base. Pitcher Rick Ankiel could not keep from throwing wild pitches, and Jon Lester, another pitcher, had trouble for years throwing the ball to first base.

The Mayo Clinic discusses this condition, which they describe as "involuntary wrist spasms that occur most commonly when golfers are trying to putt." But, as they point out, anxiety makes it worse as the athlete "becomes nervous and self-focused—overthinking to the point of distraction—that their ability to execute a skill, such as putting, is impaired."

Steve Sax, who suffered from "the yips"—the second baseman had 26 errors by the All-Star Break—would rebound to be the best defensive second baseman several years later. He credits his rebound to a conversation with his ailing father. His father told him it wasn't a mental block, rather a temporary loss of confidence—that he needed to practice being more confident and it would positively affect his play.

It makes me wonder if we don't sometimes get "the yips" in ministry. As followers of Christ, as ambassadors for Christ, and as ministers of the Gospel, the Apostle Paul shares with us that he did not lose heart. His confidence was grounded in Christ.

With 2 Corinthians 4 in mind, I would like to share three reasons we can press on with confidence as ministers of the Gospel and proclaimers of the Word.

We can have confidence because...

1. We focus our ministry on proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord.

"For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." 2 Corinthians 4:5

2. We find our strength in the surpassing power of God.

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." 2 Corinthians 4:7

3. We fix our faith on the eternal future and not the moment.

"So we do not lose heart. Though our outer

self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:16–18

Are you ready to press on in ministry for the Lord? Are you ready to share Christ with our neighbors and the nations? Are you ready to reach the next generation with the Gospel? Are you ready to minister to those needing help and relief? Are you ready to see the church you serve revitalize? Are you ready to send more missionaries? Are you ready to see the church multiply? Are you ready...? With our confidence in Christ, we can be!

I pray that God's Word will encourage us in these days. I pray that we will press on in the upward call of Christ. Praise God that He is our confidence!

You are not alone,

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